

Remarks

Applicants reply to the Office Action dated July 12, 2005 within the one month shortened statutory period for reply. The Examiner asserts a Restriction Requirement under 35 U.S.C. § 121 and election of a species for one of the identified inventions. In reply, Applicants elect an invention, elect a species with traverse, amend claims 1, 11, 30, and 34, cancel claim 44, and add claim 45. After entry of this amendment, claims 1 – 43, and 45 (3 independent claims; 44 total claims) remain pending in the application. Support for the amendments may be found in the originally filed specification, claims, and figures. No new matter has been introduced by these amendments.

Election/Restrictions

The Examiner has asserted a Restriction Requirement under 35 U.S.C. § 121 requiring restriction of the application as follows:

Invention I: Claims 1 – 43, drawn to a coupler for coupling a paintball hopper to a paintball marker, classified in class 124, subclass 45.

Invention II: Claim 44, drawn to a method of manufacturing a coupler, classified in class 124, subclass 80.

Applicants elect Invention I without traverse.

The examiner further requires election of a species from Invention I under 35 U.S.C. § 121 as follows:

Species A: Coupler in which the retaining sleeve moves axially between locked and unlocked positions;

Species B: Coupler in which the retaining sleeve moves rotationally between locked and unlocked positions;

Species C: Coupler including a feed neck, marker mount, and pins extending from the feed neck, and grooves in the marker mount to align with the pins.

The Examiner identifies claims 11, 29, 34, and 40 as being generic.

Applicants elect, with traverse, Species C, which includes at least claims 11, 29 – 33, 40 – 43 and possibly claims 2 – 6, 12 – 16, and 35 - 37. Applicants

assert that the distinctions made by the Examiner between a coupler with a retaining sleeve that moves axially, a coupler with a retaining sleeve that moves rotationally, and a coupler with pins and grooves are not mutually exclusive. For example, a retaining sleeve that moves axially between the lock and unlocked positions may include an embodiment that may also rotate as it moves axially. A retaining sleeve that moves rotationally between the locked and unlock positions may include an embodiment, referring to Figure 8, whose rotation is axial. A coupler that includes pins and grooves may include an embodiment, referring to Figure 10 that moves both axially and rotationally as the pins move along the grooves between the locked and unlocked positions. Furthermore, a coupler that includes pins and grooves may include an embodiment that uses a sleeve for holding the pins in the locking portion of the grooves. Applicants assert that a claim could be written under the disclosure of this application that comprises a sleeve, pins, grooves, axial and rotational movement. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdrawn the restriction between species and allow the prosecution of all claims identified as Invention I.

Applicants make all elections without waiver, estoppel, or prejudice to the filing of one or more related applications or claims directed to the subject matter of the cancelled or withdrawn claims.

Amendments to the Claims

Claims 1, 11, 30, and 34 are amended stylistically to change commas into semicolons at the end of each element and to place the word “and” before the last element.

Claim 45, a new claim, is directed at Species C.

The foregoing amendment places this application in conformance with the Examiner’s Restriction Requirement. Applicants submit that the application is now in condition for examination on the merits. Early notification of such action is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner have any suggestions to place the application in even better condition for allowance, Applicants request that the

Examiner contact the undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below. Reconsideration of the application is thus requested.

Dated: July 27, 2005

Respectfully submitted,

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